

are amendments that our constituents want adopted, and they sent us here to do that work quickly; not for the purpose of remodelling every portion of the organic law, but to make the substantial changes the people demand. These substantial changes, with such others as are necessary, should be made as speedily as possible. I put it to my friends, the majority of this Convention, whether it is good policy on their part, to establish a rule here which puts it in the power of the minority of this House, upon the average attendance, day after day to check the majority in what they have determined to do.

In a body of men like this, a certain number of men will always be absent. There has not been a full attendance yet. There are men elected who have never taken their seats, and yet their votes are counted. Men who have never sworn in and taken their seats under this rule are counted. Every member is counted, whether he is here or not. Suppose there are 60 members present, and a proposition gets 40 votes out of 60. Does anybody doubt that that proposition has the assent of the Convention? It has a majority of two-thirds of the members present; and yet it is lost under this rule. As my colleague remarks, if there are but 50 members present, this rule puts it in the power of any two of those members to stop any action upon the third reading of reports. It seems to me that this proposition ties up the hands of this majority, and I earnestly hope the Convention will see the necessity of rescinding this rule, and putting it in the form proposed by the amendment.

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. I think we are taking a great deal of trouble in looking far ahead, in fretting ourselves in the present about what may be coming in the future. There is a most excellent lesson in the Good Book which says, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." We have not yet come to a vote in which this rule precluded our progress; and I do not think we ought to anticipate that we shall come to such a vote. As to the non-attendance of members, it is not to be supposed that will prevail when the important business of voting upon the projects to amend the Constitution shall come up. If it shall, it will be within the power of this House to compel the attendance of the absent members; and that power in such a case ought to be exercised. Then if it appears that the Convention cannot come to a majority vote as required by the rule, upon any proposition from a committee, minority or majority, it affords a fair field for that most excellent mode of settling all difficulties, in a free land among free people, the mode of compromise; a mode, which, from the foundation of our government to the present time, whenever legislators were reasonable and patriotic enough, has never failed to secure the approbation of the majority. I apprehend we will

not have any difficulty on that subject here, coming here with the patriotic purpose to do what is best for the interests of the State. Even if we differ in one, or two, or three propositions, there will be some compromise, proposed in a spirit of compromise, between those who differ upon representation, upon the Judiciary, and upon all such questions; and we shall finally hit upon some plan that will command 49 votes in this Convention.

Otherwise you leave it, and it goes out to the people to be submitted to their vote, as a Constitution adopted by a minority of those elected to the Convention. The same difficulties that exist here will exist among the people, and our labors will be very likely to be defeated by the vote of the people. If no compromise upon these disputed points is made, if it will not carry with it that sanction of reasonableness and justice which will command our assent, the people will not adopt it when it is submitted to their consideration. For these reasons I hope the Convention will not change the rule which has been adopted by a decisive majority on several occasions, until there is some evidence that there is a practical necessity for so doing. We ought not to anticipate that such a necessity will occur.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. The gentleman from Baltimore city has appealed to the House very earnestly to change its rules; and among other things has referred to the Journal of Proceedings of yesterday, as showing that no question could have been passed yesterday by this Convention if this rule had applied to the action of the Convention.

Mr. STIRLING. I know there is one proposition here which was almost unanimously defeated. There are things rejected by majority votes.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. The gentleman seems to anticipate my answer in part. I think that instead of demonstrating the position assumed by the gentleman, the Journal of yesterday's proceedings shows that there will not be a diversity of opinion and division of votes among the members of this body, except upon merely political questions during this session. I had the happiness yesterday, which I had never expected to have, of voting with the gentleman from Baltimore city nearly every time. It was because I did not consider this a political question. I considered it a question of State policy, and not a political question. I say that the experience of yesterday shows that this rule will work well. One of the propositions offered was so very outrageous that it only received 9 votes, out of the whole number of 80 members present. I voted with the majority upon that question, and had the proud satisfaction of voting with the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Stirling.)

I think the other gentleman from Baltimore city who has spoken this morning, (Mr. Cushing,) said that if he was defeated this